

# SOCI 4393 Directed Research in Sociology

## Contact Information

Dr. Joseph M. Simpson, Associate Professor of Sociology

Email: [jsimpson@tamusa.edu](mailto:jsimpson@tamusa.edu) □ THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO CONTACT ME

Office: 347E CAB

## Course Description

This course provides outstanding sociology students with the opportunity to acquire hands-on research experience through the design, implementation, and dissemination of an original sociological research project under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Students will apply research skills developed in prior sociology coursework by engaging in activities such as literature review, research design, data collection, data analysis, manuscript preparation, conference presentations, and other scholarly products appropriate to their research project.

**Prerequisites:** SOCI 3320, SOCI 3330, cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, and instructor approval.

**Course Credits:** 3 (3-0-0)

## Course Goals

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Conduct independent sociological research under faculty supervision.
- Develop a research question that contributes to sociological knowledge.
- Conduct and synthesize a scholarly literature review.
- Demonstrate ethical research practices and compliance with human subjects protections when applicable.

- Design and implement an appropriate research methodology.
- Collect, manage, and analyze qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods data.
- Interpret research findings within relevant sociological frameworks.
- Communicate research findings through professional written and oral presentations.
- Prepare a product suitable for conference presentation, publication, community dissemination, or future academic research.

### Course Format

This course operates as a faculty-mentored research experience rather than a traditional lecture course. Students will work closely with their faculty mentor throughout the semester and are expected to demonstrate increasing independence as researchers.

Students will meet regularly with the instructor and complete agreed-upon research milestones. The specific activities completed by each student may vary depending on the nature of the research project.

### Attendance and Participation

Because this course is based on individual mentorship and project development, attendance at scheduled meetings with the instructor is required. Students are expected to maintain consistent progress on their research project throughout the semester.

Failure to attend scheduled meetings or demonstrate satisfactory progress may result in a reduction of the final course grade.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI tools may be used only with explicit instructor approval and only for approved purposes. Students remain fully responsible for all submitted work, including the accuracy of information, proper citation

practices, research integrity, and compliance with university policies regarding academic honesty and ethical research conduct.

Undisclosed use of AI-generated content may constitute academic dishonesty.

---

## Grading

| Component                                                                       | Percent     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Research Agreement and Project Plan                                             | 10%         |
| Literature Review                                                               | 15%         |
| Research Progress Reports (3)                                                   | 15%         |
| Faculty Mentor Meetings and Professional Engagement                             | 10%         |
| Data Collection and Research Materials                                          | 10%         |
| Data Analysis Report                                                            | 15%         |
| Research Presentation (Poster, Conference Presentation, or Public Presentation) | 10%         |
| Final Research Product                                                          | 15%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                    | <b>100%</b> |

## Letter Grades

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89.9
- C = 70-79.9
- D = 60-69.9
- F = Below 60

*I do not round grades or negotiate grades at the end of the semester.*

---

## Major Assignments

### **Research Agreement and Project Plan (10%)**

Develop a project plan in consultation with the faculty mentor. The plan should include research objectives, timeline, expected outcomes, and proposed research activities.

### **Literature Review (15%)**

Prepare a scholarly literature review demonstrating familiarity with the existing sociology literature relevant to the project.

### **Research Progress Reports (15%)**

Submit three written progress reports documenting accomplishments, challenges, next steps, and project development.

### **Data Collection and Research Materials (10%)**

Complete approved research activities and submit supporting materials such as field notes, interview protocols, survey instruments, datasets, coding documents, or other project artifacts.

### **Data Analysis Report (15%)**

Provide evidence of systematic analysis of data appropriate to the project's methodology.

### **Research Presentation (10%)**

Present findings through a professional venue approved by the faculty mentor. Examples include:

- Student research symposium
- Academic conference
- Poster presentation

- Department colloquium
- Community presentation

### **Final Research Product (15%)**

Submit a substantial final product approved by the faculty mentor.  
Examples include:

- Research manuscript
  - Conference paper
  - Undergraduate thesis chapter
  - Grant proposal
  - Policy report
  - Community research report
  - Publishable article
- 

### **Tentative Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1**

Project orientation and research agreement

#### **Week 2**

Finalize research question and project scope

#### **Week 3**

Literature review development

#### **Week 4**

Literature review workshop

#### **Research Plan Due**

#### **Week 5**

Research ethics and IRB considerations

### **Week 6**

Data collection preparation

### **Literature Review Due**

### **Week 7**

Data collection

### **Progress Report #1 Due**

### **Week 8**

Data collection

### **Week 9**

Data collection and preliminary analysis

### **Week 10**

Data analysis

### **Progress Report #2 Due**

### **Week 11**

Data analysis and interpretation

### **Week 12**

Preparing research presentations

### **Week 13**

Draft final product

### **Progress Report #3 Due**

### **Week 14**

Faculty mentor review and revisions

## **Week 15**

Research presentations

## **Finals Week**

**Final Research Product Due**